

Veterans Treatment Courts

Judge Royal Hansen – 3rd District

Judge Kraig Powell – 4th District

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Quick Overview of Problem-Solving Courts

- Problem-solving courts are special court dockets that seek to address specific challenges or populations:
 - Adult Drug Courts
 - Juvenile Drug Courts
 - Family Dependency Courts
 - Mental Health Courts
 - Veterans Treatment Courts
- First problem-solving courts were drug treatment courts in late 80's
- Utah's Adult Drug Courts have existed for almost 25 years

Quick Overview of Problem-Solving Courts

- Unlike traditional criminal courts, the primary purpose is not to determine whether an individual is guilty of an offense, but rather to ensure that the individual receives treatment to address unmet clinical needs.
- Problem-solving courts are **NON-ADVERSARIAL**
- Problem-solving courts focus on appropriate treatment and on behavior modification by providing **INCENTIVES** for compliance and **SANCTIONS** for violations of program rules
- Typically, individuals receive some legal benefit by participating

Quick Overview of Problem-Solving Courts

- More research has been published on the effects of drug court than on virtually all other criminal justice programs combined
- The scientific community has concluded that drug courts significantly reduce drug abuse and crime and do so at far less expense than any other justice strategy
- Based on this research, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals has promulgated two volumes of peer-reviewed **BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS**
- The U.S. currently has more than 3,000 drug courts

Veterans Treatment Courts

- The Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) model is based on the drug court and mental health court models
- First VTC started in 2008
- There are currently around 500 VTCs in the U.S.
- 8% of all inmates in state and federal prison and local jails are veterans

Veterans Treatment Courts

- Factors that distinguish VTCs from drug and mental health courts:
- Focus on Veteran defendants
- Involvement of volunteer Veteran mentors who provide non-clinical support to Veteran participants
- Treatment and support services through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and its Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) program
- Coordination of community resources

Utah Veterans Treatment Courts

- Currently four VTCs operating in Utah
 - 3rd District (Salt Lake County) – Judge Royal Hansen
 - 4th District (Utah County) – Judge Kraig Powell
 - District of Utah (federal) – Magistrate Judge Paul Warner
 - Salt Lake City Justice Court - Judge John Baxter

What Does It Take?

- Dedicated Judge
- VTC team (prosecutor, defense, case coordinator, community supervision, probation, court staff, etc.)
- VA/VJO participation and support
- Veteran Mentors
- Access to treatment, employment, and social resources
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Employment
- Extensive training

What Makes Sense and Why?

- Expanding VTCs to Davis and / or Weber Counties
 - Access to VA/VJO services
 - Public Transit
 - Employment opportunities
- Possible expansion to other areas